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ABSTRACT

Since the early 1980s, open adoption has been rapidly gaining ground, replacing the sealed records and the secrecy and shame that were attached to the subject. This book considers the long-term effects of open adoption on the children involved and presents case histories and letters from adoptees. Chapter 1, "Open Adoption: Definition, Evolution, Benefits," describes the evolving practice of open adoption and potential benefits and problems for the adoptee, birthparents, and adoptive parents. Chapter 2, "Essential Ingredients in Open Adoption," considers the key prerequisites for successful open adoptions. Chapter 3, "The Infant," discusses issues related to the "honeymoon" period, bonding and entitlement, and the developing relationships. Chapter 4, "The Preschool-age Child," presents concerns about discussing adoption with the child, the experience of grief in adopted children and adoptive parents, visitation issues, and differences in attitudes toward discipline by the birthparent and the adoptive parents. Chapter 5, "The School-Age Child, Part 1," discusses further communication with the child about adoption, children's understanding of adoption and loss; grief, guilt, and loyalty issues; communication with the birthmother; and approaching birthfathers. Chapter 6, "The School-Age Child, Part 2," presents the experiences of adoptive parents who have had ongoing visits from birthparents. Chapter 7, "The Teenage Years," revisits the issues of grief and loss related to the adolescent's developing identity. Chapter 8, "Other Dimensions of Open Adoption," considers in-family adoption, foreign adoption, and adoption of older children. Chapter 9, "Long-Term Benefits for Everybody," discusses the normalization of adoption, and highlights the benefits of open adoption for all parties involved. Contains 19 references and 6 recommended books for children. (KDFB)